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THE YEAR IN FILM 2017

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WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE SEEN FROM BEHIND THE BAR:

A group of people playing naked tag in the Rotunda in the Mall of America.

BEST WAY TO GET SERVED MORE QUICKLY AT THE BAR:

Play good music on the jukebox.

MOST ANNOYING THING SOMEONE CAN DO TO GET YOUR ATTENTION FOR A DRINK? Call the bar on a phone while standing at the bar.

Or using a laser pointer.

STRANGEST DRINK REQUEST: Paralyzer - a Colorado Bulldog with tequila instead of vodka.

BEST HANGOVER CURE: A spicy bloody mary



# CITY PAGES

December 20-26, 2017

VOLUME 37 | NUMBER 1933



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An advertisement for Hallmark Channel featuring the Trans-Siberian Orchestra. It shows a woman sitting on the floor in front of a Christmas tree, looking at a gift. A starburst graphic in the center says "2 SHOWS! 3:30PM & 8PM". The text "PRESENTS" is at the top, followed by "THE GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS EVE" and "THE BEST OF TSO AND MORE". The Hallmark Channel logo is at the top right, and the Kool 108 FM logo is in the top right corner. The bottom features the text "SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30" and the Xcel Energy Center logo, along with "LIVE NATION" and "GET TICKETS NOW" and "LIVENATION.COM • THE VENUE BOX OFFICE • 800-745-3000".

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## THE SHORTLIST

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LUCY HAWTHORNE

## THE STAT SHEET

### 6 degrees

How much Minneapolis has warmed  
since 1970 due to climate change

2

Minnesota's ranking for the worst drivers  
in the country, based on a study  
of accidents, tickets, and fatalities

### \$225

Starting price to see Pink  
at her Minneapolis show during  
the Super Bowl

### \$47.50

Price to see her when she returns  
to St. Paul in March

**"Do you get charged more  
if you don't have a fedora and/or VD?"**

Reader Jason Werner responds to "L.A. Nik just opened a Minneapolis bar. It's called World Famous SuperStar Bar," at citypages.com.

## WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

**WHILE CONGRESS** is pushing forth a massive tax cut for large corporations, it's about to let health coverage expire for nine million kids.

Funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, which covers low-income kids, ran out in September. If it doesn't get replenished soon, millions of small people will start losing their insurance in January, including 125,000 in Minnesota.

But with Congress playing errand boy for its biggest donors, rescue plans have taken a backseat. At least kids can take solace in the Republican tax bill, which will allow them to deduct expenses on their corporate helicopters.

## POPULAR STORIES AT CITYPAGES.COM

**GI JOE SHIRT GUY:** Somalis have 'taken over the whole damn town' of Willmar [Video]

Super Bowl price gouge:  
**PINK, IMAGINE DRAGONS** concerts at Minneapolis' Armory are laughably expensive

**MCNALLY SMITH** goes broke, shuts down

**MOXY HOTEL** bringing concerts, 'pet crocodile,' ass-grabbing to south Minneapolis

Netflix's new **PRINCE BIOPIC** is shockingly inaccurate

# FAKE FIGHT

The U of M's not-so-very-good War on Christmas

If you happen to see someone dressed as Santa Claus on the University of Minnesota campus, immediately report to them to the Social Justice Police. At least that's the takeaway from a story from Fox News.

America's greatest news source is reporting that Christmas and Hanukkah are effectively canceled on campus. The story is based on a school document urging faculty and students to be respectful of "diversity."

Instead of holding Christmas celebrations, the letter suggests people "consider neutral-themed parties, such as a 'winter celebration.'" Invitations should be "not reflective of any one religious holiday." The same goes for "decorations, music, and food."

Expressions of religious faith should be reserved for one's "own personal space," and not on display in "public areas (e.g. reception areas, kitchen, etc.)."

But here's the real violation of our Lord and Savior's birthday: The letter warns

against inappropriate "religious iconography" like "Santa Claus, Angels, Christmas trees, Star of Bethlehem, Dreidels, Nativity scene, Bows/wrapped gifts, Menorah, Bells, Doves, Red and Green or Blue and White/Silver decoration themes."

While the Fox report might lead one to believe it's all part of a sweeping new edict at the U, the backstory is somewhat less sinister.

The letter was only distributed by deans from one college—the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS)—to the voluntary attendees of a "dialogue" on "respecting religious diversity" earlier this month.

"The college and its leadership are committed to an inclusive community," reads the event description. "The dialogue encourages everyone to learn about religious diversity in CFANS and at the University of Minnesota, explore new issues, and build deeper meanings."

Santa reflects on the poor quality of wars being fought over his holiday.



CYANO66

tary "pizza and beverages."

So for now, consider yourselves free, U students, to dress up like an angel while hanging dreidels from the Christmas tree as trained doves ring menorah-shaped bells.

You will not be officially disciplined, though you might receive strange looks. The same way you would any time you cite something you heard from Fox News.

—MIKE MULLEN

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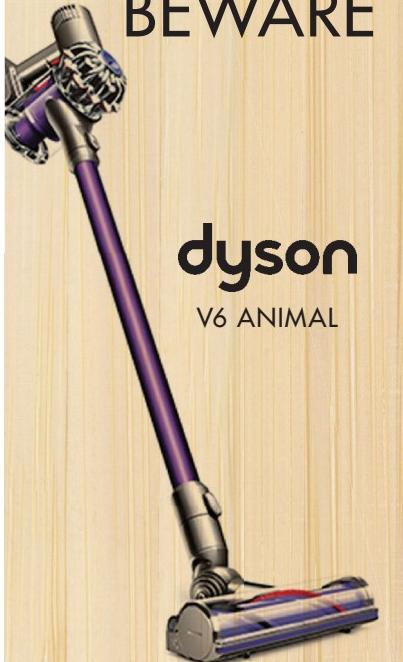


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# The Leggings Trap

An army of angry moms is at the base of LulaRoe's pyramid scheme

**A**t 25, Pamela Winkelman was divorced with two children to support. She had a job in the medical field, but she wanted more.

Then she found a boutique with items unusual for St. Cloud: exquisite dresses, fancy hats, flashy head-to-toe ensembles. And they carried Winkelman's size.

"I was still just learning to love myself... regardless of what size I wear, or what the scale says," she recalls. In those clothes, "You knew you looked nice."

Her friendship with the owner convinced her to open a boutique someday. It would be a decade before an acquaintance recruited her into LulaRoe, a clothing company that, as Winkelman understood it, functioned as a wholesaler selling directly to independent entrepreneurs.

According to company lore, Deanne Stidham was a mother of seven when she first started selling wholesalers' clearance items to friends and family. Deanne and husband Mark launched LulaRoe as a way for women to live out the dream "to be at home, be a mom, and provide for her family." The company's guiding principles: "I believe in you and you can do it."

LulaRoe sold these work-from-home women not just clothing, but a chance at professionalism. Entry-level sellers were called "consultants," while those who recruited additional saleswomen were "sponsors," getting bonuses based on their recruits' purchases from the company. The "leadership" scheme climbed two more tiers, with "mentors" at the top.

A Business Insider story from 2016, just months after Winkelman joined, reported LulaRoe was "making millennial moms

rich." "Tens of thousands" of them were collecting "massive profits."

Company policy dictated Winkelman spend more than \$5,500 on inventory, and moving that merchandise in the St. Cloud area was "easy" at first, she says. "People around here hadn't even heard of [LulaRoe]. It was something we didn't have at the time, so there wasn't a lot of competition."

Working with a friend, Winkelman, who remarried and had a third child, hawked

**Business Insider said LulaRoe was "making millennial moms rich."**

clothes through Facebook and pop-ups at her home. LulaRoe also placed Winkelman into private Facebook groups, where she was constantly shown the "incredible money" other women were making.

"They would post screenshots saying their pop-up party ended with \$5,000 in sales," Winkelman says. "That's unbelievable."

Especially to most of the people who joined the company after Winkelman did. From fall 2016 to spring 2017, the number of LulaRoe sellers doubled, from 38,000-something to more than 75,000. In a follow-up story based on leaked company data, Business Insider backtracked: Less than 20 percent of LulaRoe participants had

cracked \$5,000 in sales in February 2017, and more than 10,000 sold nothing at all.

It didn't help that the quality of some items was, in Winkelman's word, "crap." Leggings, marketed as "buttery-soft," had always been LulaRoe's signature product. But reports began to pile up of leggings coming apart at the seams after only a few washings.

Winkelman, meanwhile, had grown tired of staying up after everyone went to bed to post photos of clothes. Yet she still had designs on starting a boutique. LulaRoe sells leggings for about \$10 a pair to its clients, who then sell them for about \$21 to customers. But when she paged through wholesale clothing catalogs, she found almost identical leggings for \$1 a pair, she says.

"The more I found, the more I found out about the company, and who it is they're using."

At least LulaRoe allowed its distributors to send unsold clothes back to the home office. Until September, that is, when the company changed its policy: Sellers would now receive just 90 percent value, and had to pay for shipping. Seasonal and discontinued items could not be returned, nor could clothes removed from their packaging.

The change was the last straw for Winkelman. She took a page from the LulaRoe game plan, forming a private Facebook group to spread the word. Her "Seeking Justice" page now has more than 1,000 members, many of whom are on the ground floor of a class-action suit filed in California.

The complaint accuses LulaRoe of running a pyramid scheme, and falsely advertising "part-time work for full-time pay." As noted in the lawsuit, consultants were "inundated with the slogan 'buy more sell



**Mike Mullen**

more,'" and many followed it to desperate ends. Some maxed out credit cards. Others took out private loans. Winkelman says one woman in her Facebook group is \$55,000 in debt.

LulaRoe says the claims are "baseless, factually inaccurate, and misinformed," adding: "Our success has made us the target of organized competitive attacks and predatory litigation."

Mark Stidham said only someone with an "uneducated opinion" would think LulaRoe's structure—with its four tiers, money trickling ever-upward, and everyone enlisted to recruit new members—is a pyramid scheme.

Even Pamela Winkelman acknowledges LulaRoe's telling the truth about one part: The company is phenomenally successful. But it's not in the business of selling clothes, she believes. It sells women on a new version of themselves, as self-made entrepreneurs, remaking their lives without leaving home or logging off Facebook.

"Now that I'm out," Winkelman says, "I cannot believe how much money I spent ordering from LulaRoe. But when you're in that world, it's almost like a cult." □

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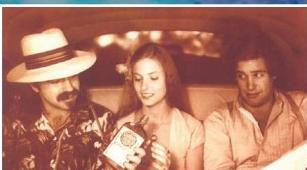
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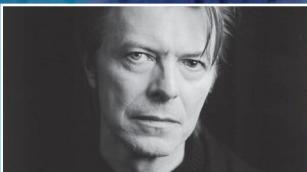
DAVINA AND  
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JANUARY 1



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JANUARY 5–6



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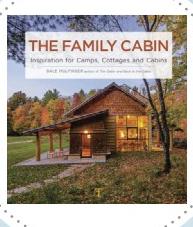
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# Holiday Guide

GIFTS & ENTERTAINMENT 2017





WARNER BROS.

# THE YEAR IN FILM

*What a year for escapism* BY TONY LIBERA

This may have been a terrible twelve months for humanity, but it was a phenomenal time for movies. With epic spectacles *Dunkirk* and *Blade Runner 2049*, slices of life *Lady Bird* and *The Florida Project*, and nightmarish horror stories *IT* and *Get Out*, 2017 distinguished itself with standout pictures across all genres—and gave us plenty of opportunities to hide away in the darkness of the theater.

## BEST PICTURE: *Blade Runner 2049*

While it's not exactly surprising that an R-rated sci-fi neo-noir underperformed at the domestic box office, *Blade Runner 2049* is by far the best movie of the year and one of the best movies in the past several years. The story is as clever as it is captivating, Roger Deakins' cinematography is jaw-dropping... Ryan Gosling is in it. *2049* hits every note and works seamlessly. Did we mention there are badass fighting robots? As of press time, we're still waiting to see Steven Spielberg's *The Post*, Guillermo del Toro's *The Shape of Water*, and Paul Thomas

Anderson's *Phantom Thread*, all of which have received early praise from critics. But it'd be difficult for any of them to unseat *Blade Runner 2049* as the year's best.

## THE DEAD HORSE AWARD: *Transformers: The Last Knight*

Speaking of fighting robots, 2017 saw Michael Bay once again punishing millennials with his fifth assault on the once-beloved *Transformers* franchise. *The Last Knight* was, to no one's surprise, the worst-reviewed movie in the series, but that's not stopping Paramount from pumping

out a *Bumblebee* spinoff in 2018 and a sixth *Transformers* installment in 2019, tentatively titled *Transformers 6: The Search for More Money*. Somebody please make it stop. Optimus Prime doesn't deserve this.

## BEST ACTOR: Daniel Day-Lewis

As previously mentioned, *Phantom Thread* hasn't been released yet. So giving Daniel Day-Lewis the ol' tip of the cap seems a bit premature. But seeing as he's probably the greatest actor of his generation and is sure to go hard in what will be his final acting gig, and seeing as how

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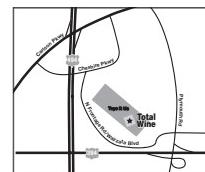
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*Get Out*

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

this is our list and we can do whatever we want, here we go—Best Actor: Daniel Day-Lewis. In *Phantom Thread*, he's again teaming up with Paul Thomas Anderson, whose 2007 masterpiece *There Will Be Blood* snagged Day-Lewis his second of three Best Actor Oscars. How could this not be legendary? Honorable Mention: Let's also acknowledge Daniel Kaluuya here, since neither he nor *Get Out* will likely get any love from the big award ceremonies. It's a shame given the sneaky brilliance of both Kaluuya's performance and Jordan Peele's directorial breakout as a whole.

#### BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY: *Get Out*

You know what, let's go ahead and give *Get Out* its due. Jordan Peele's inventive, terrifying, and insightful screenplay goes so far beyond your typical horror movie that it's hard to even classify it. (The Golden Globes certainly fumbled when determining the film's genre.) Peele's been doing amazing work for years, but nobody could have predicted just how good his directorial debut would be. *Get Out* is easily one of the best movies of the year—and the fact that it's not your typical award winner makes it all the more worthy of accolades.

#### BEST ACTRESS: Frances McDormand, *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*

*The Post*, *The Shape of Water*, and *Molly's Game* have all received buzz for Best Actress, but as far as released movies go, *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*'s Frances McDormand tops the list. McDormand is perennially solid, but her latest role as a woman fed up with the police after her daughter's murder stands out as one of her best. McDormand flexes so many different muscles here, knocking everything out of the park, that it'd be a shock if she didn't take home some hardware this awards season.

#### WORST STEPHEN KING ADAPTATION: *The Dark Tower*

This year saw four Stephen King stories turned into movies: *IT*, *The Dark Tower*, *Gerald's Game*, and *1922*. While *Gerald's Game* is considered one of King's worst books, it was actually the film rendition of *The Dark Tower*, King's self-proclaimed magnum opus, which distinguished itself as the biggest flaming pile of garbage. Idris Elba's casting was a huge cause for optimism, but rather than going with a close adaptation of the first book, *The Gunslinger*, the studio mashed a bunch of plot points together for a less engaging and far more scatterbrained storyline, which it tried to play off as intentional and crafty. Matthew McConaughey's acting as the Man in Black doesn't help, as he basically plays a weird, almost comical, villainous version of himself. The tragedy here is that fans of *The Dark Tower* have been waiting decades for a movie adaptation of Roland Deschain's near-eternal quest. This is how their patience is repaid.

#### BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR: Willem Dafoe, *The Florida Project*

While the kids steal the show in *The Florida Project*, Willem Dafoe's turn as a big-hearted motel manager is the best supporting role of the year. Dafoe's career has been largely defined by more intense portrayals, so seeing a tender side, and how well he can pull it off, is a treat that will surely up people's perceptions of the actor. That's not to say he's without some ferocity. One of the more noteworthy scenes finds Dafoe's character catching a strange man hanging around the motel kids—and handling the creep with quick-witted, papa bear dominance.

#### MOST UNNECESSARY REMAKE: *The Mummy*

This is one of the more hotly contested categories. You've got *Beauty and the Beast*, which remakes a classic and at times feels

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Lady Bird



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like a shot-for-shot copy—but worse. Then there's *Baywatch*, which had *21 Jump Street* potential, but fell far short of the mark. And then there's *The Mummy*, an action movie so blah not even Hollywood's most reliable presence, Tom Cruise, could save it. Since *Beauty and the Beast* and *Baywatch* weren't outright offensive, *The Mummy* takes the crown here. It's the franchise reboot that nobody wanted, only made worse by its execution. The trailer did give us that hilariously bad Tom Cruise scream, though, and for that, we're forever grateful.

#### MOST ACCURATE DEPICTION OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL:

*Lady Bird*

Greta Gerwig's coming-of-age tale of Sacramento angst hit a bunch of nails on their heads: teenage sexuality, complex maternal relationships, marching off to a college as far away as possible. But for those of us reluctantly sent to Catholic high schools, it also offered a spot-on depiction of private religious education. Not that this is wholly unexplored territory, but Gerwig manages to capture the little nuances—like keeping six inches for Jesus between you and your S.O. while dancing—that make Catholic school such a weird place to grow up. *Lady Bird* never makes any judgment, only presenting the backdrop and allowing its characters to wander. So while Lady Bird chomps on communion wafers and fights back against a teacher's guilt-trippy abortion narrative, she still ultimately deems it sad that some people can't believe in God. Only a truly authentic Catholic school setting could inspire that sort of spiritual dissonance.

#### BEST SUPERHERO MOVIE:

*Logan*

This year saw a few decent superhero movies (and then *Justice League*), but *Logan* separated itself from the pack by taking risks and subverting the stale Save the Universe storyline so omnipresent

in Marvel pictures. It was great seeing Wolverine, a character known for brutally murdering people in the comics, finally unleashed in an R-rated movie. Tackling the downswing of aging superheroes was an interesting avenue for the film to take, with a broader human storyline outdoing the coolness of mutant powers. We live in hope that *Logan*'s success shows Hollywood there's demand for more adult-oriented comic book stories.

#### BEST USE OF A BED SHEET:

*A Ghost Story*

If you saw the trailer for *A Ghost Story*, you might have laughed at the ridiculous Charlie Brown-type phantom walking around a field. But David Lowery's meditation on life and death is anything but funny. The filmmaker initially tried using a real bed sheet, but ultimately had to use a custom piece of cloth and simplify his blocking to give his protagonist the spectral quality he desired. The result is a stupidly simple idea come to life in an utterly brilliant fashion.

#### MOST DISTURBING ACT OF CANNIBALISM:

*Mother!*

*Mother!* was troubling for a lot of reasons, but—spoiler alert—a baby getting ripped apart and eaten probably tops the list of disturbing acts.

#### BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS:

**Laurie Metcalf and Sylvia Hoeks (tie)**

Laurie Metcalf has had quite the year, filming the *Roseanne* revival, winning a Tony award, and perfectly embodying the overbearing mother archetype in *Lady Bird*. Metcalf's role is small in scope, but she articulates so much that her performance seems wholly real. If you, like us, found *Lady Bird* astoundingly true to life, Metcalf plays a huge part in that. On the polar opposite side of things, we have Sylvia

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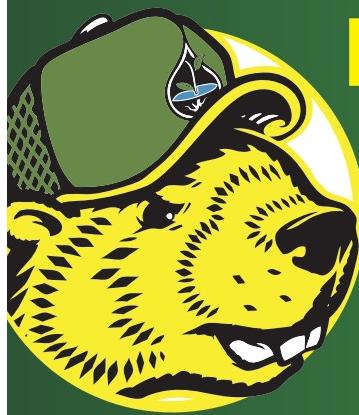
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Hoeks as the murderous replicant Luv in *Blade Runner 2049*. Hoeks' progression is fascinating to watch: She begins as a buttoned-up corporate type, courteously showing Ryan Gosling's character around the office. Sooner rather than later, she devolves into a sadistic killing machine and the best villain of the year.

#### **WORST ACCENT:** *Charlize Theron, Atomic Blonde*

Charlize Theron's British accent in *Atomic Blonde* is abysmal. Sure, it winds up a plot point rather than a failure on her part, but that only undermines the film further. Somehow no master spy picks up on her dubious origins? We're as unimpressed with their powers of observation as we are with Theron's unplaceable brogue.

#### **GOOFIEST LOOKING VILLAIN:** *David Thewlis, Wonder Woman*

Like all DC movies of late, *Wonder Woman* has some major flaws. Yes, Gal Gadot is great as Princess Diana of Themyscira. But her nemesis? Not so much. Spoilers: As a very telegraphed plot twist reveals David Thewlis' Sir Patrick Morgan to actually be Ares, god of war, Thewlis undergoes a magical transformation from dapper British gentleman to armor-clad god—all the while maintaining his accent and his distinctly British period-piece mustache. It's hard to take the ultimate battle for the fate of the world seriously with a foppish cookie-duster poking out every other shot.

#### **FEEL-BAD MOVIE OF THE YEAR:** *Good Time*

The Safdie brothers' *Good Time* is the kind of movie where anything that can go wrong does go wrong, and with every twist of terrible fate we're pulled deeper into the mire. Robert Pattinson dominates the movie as bank robber Connie Nikas, showing off terrific acting chops that

years of *Twilight* movies kept hidden. It's not easy making a scumbag likable, and while Connie is too deplorable to ever been seen as a good guy, Pattinson's range helps us sympathize with his quest to save his brother from the clink. That doesn't mean it's easy to watch.

#### **BEST ANIMATED FEATURE:** *Coco*

There weren't many good animated pictures this year, but that shouldn't detract from the wonderful novelty of *Coco*. Pixar's tale of a boy who crosses into the land of the dead was a huge step toward telling more diverse stories. Its realization was both respectful of traditional Mexican culture and fresh in its storytelling approach. *Coco* is the complete animated package: a poignant story fleshed out with a dazzling spectacle—Pixar's most eye-catching visuals in years.

#### **WORST OPENING SHORT EVER:** *"Olaf's Frozen Adventure"*

We're still mad that we were forced to sit through twenty-some agonizing minutes of "Olaf's Frozen Adventure." While we're glad Disney and Pixar have decided to remove the shameless *Frozen* plug from theaters, we're sad that we'll never get those minutes of our lives back. Fuck you, Olaf.

#### **BEST COMEDY:** *The Big Sick*

*The Big Sick* tackles some seriously heavy subject matter, but having lived through the experience, co-writer and star Kumail Nanjiani is able to bring a necessary dose of levity to an otherwise harrowing story. Nanjiani shows surprising range for a comedian, but above all he shows off his ability to make anything funny, a fact that fans of less mainstream comedy have been keen to for years. Ray Romano almost steals the show, but it's ultimately the former's film. ☀

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# ETHIOPIAN COMFORT

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BY STACY BROOKS

**T**hick lentil stews flavored with generous helpings of onions, garlic, and ginger. Tender, slow-cooked meats seasoned with warming spices. Spongy rounds of flatbread nearly two feet across, designed to sop up every last drop of sauce. Ethiopian cuisine is the ultimate comfort food for a Minnesota winter—but a surprising number of Twin Citians are missing out on the delights of doro wat and injera.

“When we first opened in 2016, we served many people who had never eaten Ethiopian or Eritrean food before,” says Genet Ghebre, owner of Ghebre’s Restaurant in St. Paul. “I was surprised by how many people hadn’t tried it.”

The Twin Cities is home to one of the largest Ethiopian diaspora populations in the United States, and the region has a correspondingly vibrant dining scene. Fasika, Dilla’s Ethiopian Restaurant, and the Red Sea have earned their status as popular standbys; more recent additions worth

visiting include Bolé Ethiopian Cuisine and Ghebre’s. The first thing newcomers to the cuisine will notice is that it’s eaten sans utensils. Instead, diners use pieces of injera—a spongy flatbread not dissimilar to a pancake—to pick up each bite.

“Think of the injera as a vehicle for the sauce,” says Solomon Haile, who co-owns Bolé Ethiopian Cuisine in St. Paul with his wife, Rekik Abaineh. The tangy bread is made with teff, a nutrient-dense whole grain, and it tastes somewhat sour on its own. But when rolled up with stews, that flavor is beautifully balanced out.

“Other African countries may have similar stews, but they are served over rice,” Abaineh explains. “The sauce and injera combination is unique to Ethiopia, and the well-combined flavors are also what makes the cuisine unique.”

Intimidated? There’s no need to be: The staff at Ghebre’s will be happy to provide a demonstration of how to eat with injera. “We bring out a little plate of food and show them how to do it. Customers pick it up easily—we appreciate their willingness

to try new things,” says Ghebre. She adds that Americans aren’t exactly strangers to finger foods: Tacos share a similar flat-bread-wrapped-around-a-filling concept.

Ethiopian cuisine is particularly vegetarian-friendly, with lentils, split peas, and other vegetables playing a prominent role. That’s due to religious reasons: Nearly half of Ethiopia’s population belongs to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which requires laypeople to fast—abstaining from meat and dairy products—for about 180 days a year. “Because there is so much fasting, there is lots of variety in the vegetarian dishes so that people aren’t eating the same thing every day,” Abaineh explains.

Another hallmark is a heavy reliance on garlic and ginger, which are used in different ways depending on the dish, along with peppers and black cardamom. Common dishes include stews (wat) made with lamb and beef, and doro wat, made with chicken, which is an especially popular dish in Ethiopian restaurants (though Abaineh says it’s a traditionally a holiday meal in Ethiopia, one that can take three

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to four hours to prepare). Ghebre's Indian customers have mentioned that doro wat is similar to an Indian dish, and many of the spices she uses are similar to those used in Indian cuisine. Americans tend to worry that it will be too spicy. "But it doesn't need to be!" she says, laughing. "You can always tell when doro wat is authentic—when it's excellent."

Ready to sample some for yourself? Here's a roundup of the Twin Cities' top Ethiopian restaurants.

#### Bolé Ethiopian Cuisine

A relative newcomer, Bolé Ethiopian Cuisine opened in June 2017 and has a warm ambiance perfect for a cozy date night. One of the most popular dishes here is the authentic kitfo, a specialty of the Gurage tribe (of which co-owner Solomon Haile is a member). A flavorful mixture of ground beef, chili powder, and spiced butter, kitfo is traditionally served just slightly cooked—but diners can order it medium-rare or even well done if they prefer. Newbies to Ethiopian cuisine should check out the veggie roll, a Bolé invention: legume stew spread on injera, rolled up, and then sliced, sushi roll-style. 490 N. Syndicate St., St. Paul; 651-917-9332

#### Ghebre's Restaurant

What stands out most about Ghebre's Restaurant is the warm, gracious service—sitting down to a meal here feels like coming home (assuming that your kitchen also happens to feature delicious Ethiopian and Eritrean cuisine). Hit dishes include red lentils, chicken and spinach, and the potato curry, made with a special family recipe. Owner Genet Ghebre is particularly proud of the meticulously prepared doro wat, which emphasizes the sauce rather than the chicken legs. If you want to try it all, there's a buffet (Saturdays from 11:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. and Sundays from 12:30

p.m. to 4:30 p.m.) that includes doro wat and many of the restaurant's other popular dishes. Ghebre's has a full liquor license and a wine selection that pairs especially well with their meat dishes. 512 Snelling Ave., St. Paul; 651-493-4324

#### Fasika

A beloved fixture of the local Ethiopian scene, Fasika offers a wide range of entrees, including some featuring fish. Portions are generous, especially if you opt for the "Ultimate Combination," a sampler platter loaded with all of the restaurant's beef, lamb, chicken, and vegetarian dishes. According to the menu, it feeds two or three, but it can easily serve a party of four or five—so gather up some friends. 510 Snelling Ave., St. Paul; 651-646-4747

#### The Red Sea

The Red Sea has been serving an encyclopedic menu of Ethiopian and Eritrean cuisine since 1990. Start with the sambusa (savory filled pastries), and then try the siga wat (beef stew cooked with traditional spices) or the yegeb alicha (slow-cooked lamb flavored with spiced butter). There's a vegetarian lunch buffet Monday through Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and a full bar featuring several Ethiopian beers offers a daily happy hour from 4 to 9 p.m. 320 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis; 612-333-1644

#### Dilla's Ethiopian Restaurant

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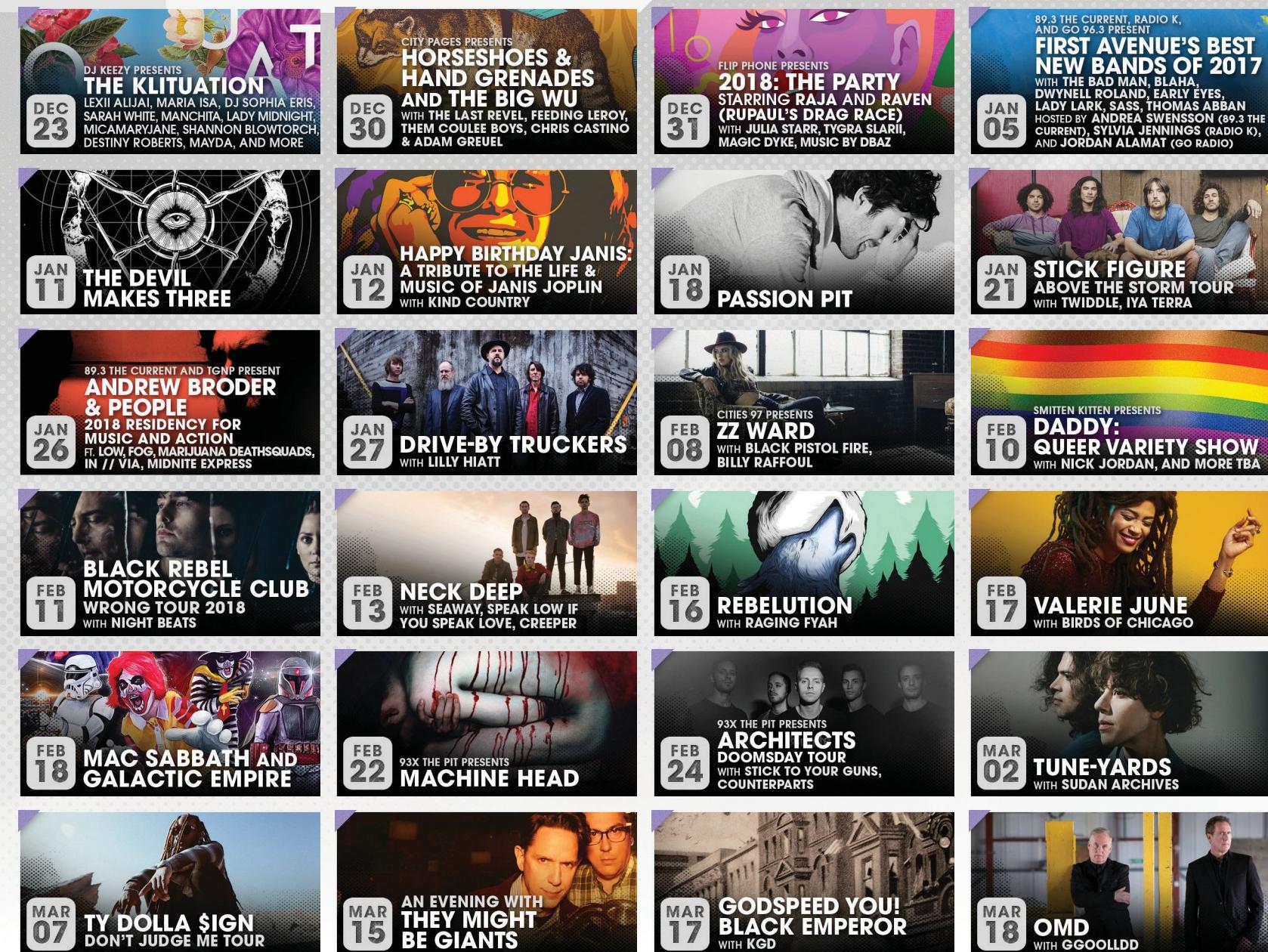
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# A

# LIST

**FRIDAY** Ludachristmas at the Hex P. 24

**SATURDAY** Psycho Suzi's hosts a holiday party P. 25

**SUNDAY** Jewbilee parties at First Avenue P. 25

**WEDNESDAY 12.20**

**MOVIE**

## TURKISH STAR WARS

TRYLON CINEMA

Even the most contemptuous critics of the *Star Wars* franchise tend to acknowledge the level of technical skill brought into the creation of the Lucasfilm universe. The same cannot be said of the many off-brand imitators that attempted to attract audiences with highly derivative space operas. One notorious example, receiving a rare screening at the Trylon Cinema, has come to be known as the *Turkish Star Wars* (1982) due to the filmmakers' shamelessly inept splicing of footage from the 1977 classic into their own tale. The completely unauthorized use of these scenes has earned the film a reputation as a *Star Wars* rip-off, but the movie has a bizarre vision all its own. Originally titled *Dünyayı Kurtaran Adam* (*The Man Who Saved the World*), the film features an erratic plotline involving the efforts of two space pilots to thwart the intergalactic schemes of a 1,000-year-old wizard and his army of monsters, zombies, and ninjas. Such a brief synopsis does little justice to the unhinged narrative twists, which are made all the more surreal by being set to an array of familiar (and completely unlicensed) music from a wide range of sources (including John Williams' iconic score for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*). A cinematic oddity that needs to be seen to be believed, *Turkish Star Wars* presents an unforgettable demented take on a galaxy far, far away. 7 p.m. \$5. 3258 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis; 612-424-5468. —BRAD RICHASON

**BEER**

## DARKEST DAY OF THE YEAR CELEBRATION: TAP TAKE OVER

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the type of rare and high-alcohol beers that aficionados wait in line and form cult followings for. The staggered releases will start at 3 p.m., and the menu includes hard-to-find local brews like Insight Gravity Well Double Barrel 2016, aged beers like Surly Four, and notable nationals like Dogfish Head Vanilla World Wide Stout and Goose Island Bourbon County Stout. Beers from Bent Paddle, Ballast Point, Founders, Lift Bridge, and many others will also be available. For those who need a little more warmth, out on the heated patio they'll pour specialty Pappy Van Winkle and Buffalo Trace bourbons. 3 p.m. to 2 a.m. Free. 1400 Lagoon Ave., Minneapolis; 612-824-3333. —LOREN GREEN

**COMEDY**

## JENNY ZIGRINO

ACME COMEDY CO.

City Pages caught up with comedian Jenny Zigrino back in November, right before she flew to the U.K. Here in

America, things are also taking off. Her Comedy Central special debuted recently, though she hasn't worked up the nerve to watch it. Well, sort of. "The day it premiered I was out of town doing a club," she says, "and we just went to this bar in the middle of nowhere and asked if they would turn the sound on for me on the TV. They put it on Comedy Central, but wouldn't put the sound on. So, I just watched myself in silence and ate a pizza," she says. It was probably just as well, as she has a hard time watching herself on TV. "I can't actually look at myself and be constructive in any way because I'm caught up in everything visual." If she's working on material, she'll only use audio recordings. "My brain only wants to focus on, 'My hair is doing a weird thing and my shirt doesn't look right.'" 18+. 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$18. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday** —P.F. WILSON

**THURSDAY 12.21**

**ART/PARTY**

## MAKE AND MINGLE: EVERGREEN

SILVERWOOD PARK

No matter what holidays you celebrate, this time of year inspires craftiness. With cold winter nights and dark days, it's the perfect time of year to dig into some handmade projects, especially if you've got some warm drinks to keep you sustained and friends to keep you company. Over at Silverwood Park, you can get into a festive spirit at their winter solstice celebration. Silverwood's Mix and Mingle series is a quarterly happening, with artists, naturalists, and musicians teaming up for a grownups-only event that will get you creating and socializing. Roll up your sleeves and make some giftable art using resin and evergreens as singer-songwriter Zach Zurn performs. Take a winter



KAREN NELSON

watercolor lesson while you sip some free Northern Lights Tea, and enjoy snacks from the big Red Wagon food truck. You're welcome to bring your own beer or wine to sip and share. 21+. 6 to 9 p.m. \$14. 2500 Cty. Rd. E, St. Anthony; 763-694-7707. —SHEILA REGAN

#### COMEDY

### TIFFANY NORTON, TOMMY THOMPSON, DAVID HARRIS

JOKE JOINT COMEDY CLUB

Tiffany Norton is a proud native of St. Paul. "In St. Paul, we have bit of a chip on our shoulder," she concedes. "We're the older city, but Minneapolis gets all the fun stuff." Norton started writing jokes in college, and kept a notebook full of them for years. "I didn't know how all that worked," she says of standup comedy. "I thought you had to be special, or someone would tell you it's something you should do. In a way my teachers told me that, because they said I talked too much. It wasn't until I was in my mid-30s that I started." By then, she had a solid broadcasting career and is probably most recognized in the Twin Cities as the executive producer of the *Moon and Staci Show* on KS95. Standup gives her a slightly different platform than the radio show, though occasionally the two paths will cross. "Sometimes we'll talk about something on the show that I can talk more about onstage. Or we'll be talking about something on the show that I might have a bit about, so it can work both ways." Norton will perform Thursday night at the Joke Joint. Others standups scheduled this week include Tommy Thompson (Friday) and David Harris (Saturday). 7 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. \$14-\$19. 801 Sibley Memorial Hwy., Lilydale; 651-330-

9078. Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON

#### MUSEUM/PARTY

### WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

AMERICAN SWEDISH INSTITUTE

This week, the American Swedish Institute celebrates the winter solstice with bonfires in the courtyard, a musical theater performance by Impossible Salt, self-guided tours of the Turnblad Mansion, and plenty of glögg and other festive treats from FIKA Cafe. Impossible Salt's last interactive show at ASI, *The Stranger*, won over audiences' hearts in 2015. Their new piece, *Wise One*, is inspired by a Norwegian folktale, *The Seventh Father of the House*. Singing performers will tell the story of a traveling wanderer who seeks rest in an elusive castle. It's a festive work that blends drama, dance, and games with folk songs and new music, composed in collaboration with the Minneapolis Music Company. Minneapolis-based photographer/illustrator Per Breihagen will also be on hand to chat about and sign books from *The Christmas Wish*, the best-selling children's series he co-created with his wife, Lori Evert. 5 to 9 p.m. Free with museum admission (\$5-\$10). 2600 Park Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-871-4907. —SHEILA REGAN

#### PARTY

### GROWN-UP CLUB'S FORCED RETIREMENT PARTY

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 ▶



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## A-LIST



SARAH ASCANIO

### CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ▶

nights. Poop emoji ornaments were made, Capture the Flag was played, science and diorama fairs were held, and many, many beers were consumed. This Thursday, the Club will be hosting one final party, packed with children's activities for adults. There will be coloring sessions, a few cheeky craft-making opportunities, pickle-themed prizes, pints of beer, and more. The club, founded by a group of friends, will say goodbye and toast to a new—but hopefully still childlike—era. 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Free. 2600 27th Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-722-3454. —PATRICK STRAIT

### HOLIDAY

## LAST-MINUTE SHOPPING

HERBIVOROUS BUTCHER/FOOD BUILDING

Well, crap. You waited until the last moment to finish up Christmas shopping, didn't you? Fortunately, you won't have to gift anyone windshield wipers from the gas station or sift through the slim pickings at Target, as there are two pop-up events tonight. First, you can give the gift of delicious vegan sweets at Herbivorous Butcher's holiday pop-up shop (507 First Ave. NE, Minneapolis; 612-208-0992). Friday from noon to 4 p.m. you can scoop up treats while they last. There will be cupcakes; choose from flavors like hot chocolate, chocolate candy cane, gingerbread with eggnog frosting, and cranberry with apple cider frosting. Or go for tiny joys with boxes of candies such as white chocolate peanut butter, maple buttercream, and chocolate-covered cherries. Meanwhile, Last Call in the FOOD Building (1401 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis; 612-545-5555) will help you panic-shop in a party environment. Check out items from local makers, including jewelry, print art, meat, and makeup. If you buy something at the event, you'll also

score free wrapping. To add to the festivities, live music and tarot-card readings are also planned, and you'll be able to drink while you shop (always a bonus). This market runs from 2 to 8 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

SATURDAY 12.23

**FILM/HOLIDAY**

**CHRISTMAS AT THE RIVERVIEW 2017**

RIVERVIEW THEATER

Those seeking Christmas-themed screenings need look no further than the Riverview Theater's annual holiday classics series. Set to the iconic songs of Irving Berlin, the widely cherished musical *White Christmas* (1954) follows two entertainers and ex-soldiers (Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye) who, after being smitten with two singing sisters (Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen), propose pooling their talents for a Christmas Eve spectacular to save a struggling Vermont inn owned by the men's former commanding officer. Drawing upon warm reminiscences of childhood, *A Christmas Story* (1983) mines heartfelt humor from the tale of a nine-year-old boy who (when not being chased by neighborhood

**PARTY**

**CHRISTMAS EVE EVE PARTY**

PSYCHO SUZI'S MOTOR LOUNGE

You've got approximately 24 hours before the holiday family obligations kick in, so make the most of it. This Saturday night, Psycho Suzi's will be hosting a holiday party filled with booze, tunes, and pu pu platters. Order up one of their charming—and super alcoholic—cocktails and hit the dance floor, where DJ Theology will spin a mix of house, trance, and tropical tunes (you are in a tiki bar, after all). Ugly sweaters and other festive gear is encouraged, but if all you have is a bit of holiday cheer, then that works, too. 21+. 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Free. 1900 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis; 612-788-9069. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER



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p.m. (*White Christmas*), 6:30 p.m. (*A Christmas Story*), and 8:30 p.m. (*It's a Wonderful Life*). 3800 42nd Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-729-7369. **Wednesday through Saturday** —BRAD RICHASON

SUNDAY 12.24

**PARTY**

**JEWBILEE 2017**

FIRST AVENUE/7TH ST. ENTRY

Whether you're looking for something with slightly less Santa propaganda this Christmas Eve or just need a post-Hanukkah rager, the annual Jewbilee is back once again this Sunday. Now in its 15th year, the annual mashup of music and comedy, presented by TC Jewfolk, features performances by Challo, Planet Plookey, the Sons, and Andy Cook, with comedy from Dan Mogol, Sidney Oxborough, Aaron Isaacs, Zachary Kagan, and Sim Glaser, aka "The Inappropriate Rabbi." It's your reward for sucking it up and surviving a plethora of crappy holiday celebrations, ugly sweater parties, and forced family get-togethers. Plus, it's cheap to get into and almost no one has to work on Monday, so you can save that sick day for the 26th instead. 18+. 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. \$5. 701 First Ave. N, Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —PATRICK STRAIT

bullies) dreams of finding the ultimate gift of a Red Ryder air rifle under the Christmas tree. Rounding out the trio of films, *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) offers one of James Stewart's greatest turns as George Bailey, a family man on the brink of despair who is given

the chance to reappraise his life by experiencing the world as it would have been had he never existed. Admission is \$2 per film or \$1 with a non-perishable food item (a portion of all ticket sales will be donated to the Minnehaha Food Shelf). Daily screenings are at 4

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# A PACKED HOUSE

*Dot works best when it focuses on the lead*



PETRONELLA J. YTSMA

BY JAY GABLER

In *Dot*, the title character—like Ebenezer Scrooge—doesn't realize it's Christmas. She has to ask. Unlike Scrooge, though, Dot is beset by spirits that will never leave. She has Alzheimer's. Time has become fluid, and Christmas future is Christmas past.

The poignant story of Dotty (Cynthia Jones-Taylor), an African-American woman struggling against the reality that she can no longer live independently, is at the heart of Park Square Theatre's ambitious holiday production. Colman Domingo's 2015 play, however, also tries to tell several more stories, padding what could have been a tight and engrossing show into one that runs unnecessarily long—the better part of three hours including intermission.

It's December in Philadelphia, and Dot's three adult children are coming home for the holidays. Under the direction of E.G. Bailey, the play features a nifty set by Andrea Heilman: The first half unfolds in the kitchen, and then after intermission the set reverses to reveal the family's festively decorated living room.

Dotty's daughter Shelly (Yvette Ganier) has become the exhausted principal caretaker—by default, because the rest of the family doesn't realize the extent of the care that's now needed. Shelly's brother Donnie (Ricardo Beard) is a broke music writer whose marriage to Adam (Michael Hanna) is increasingly strained, while her sister Averie (Dame-Jasmine Hughes) is trying to build a remunerative personal brand on the basis of one viral video.

As if all that wasn't more than enough, the family has an old friend who's come back into their lives. Jackie (Anna Letts Lakin) is a white woman who grew up in the neighborhood, becoming Donnie's first and only girlfriend. Now she's single and pregnant, and feeling nostalgic for Donnie, with whom she shared a genuine if ultimately platonic affection. Oh, and Dotty also has a caretaker (Maxwell Collyard) who's a refugee from Kazakhstan.

When it keeps its focus on Dotty, Domingo's play offers an illuminating window into the torturous circumstances of a family affected by a disease that claims lives in slow motion. Jones-Taylor gives the show a powerful core. Much of the play, though, is less compelling. ■

**DOT**  
Park Square Theatre  
20 W. Seventh Pl., St. Paul  
651-291-7005; through January 7

and sad, but who knows there's still a lot she can give. As Shelly, Ganier plays it admirably tough while nonetheless leaving us to wonder whether her siblings are on to something when they tell her she's driving herself too hard.

The sprawling subplot involving Jackie, Donnie, and Adam, though, drags. Further, Lakin is awkward to a fault. Granted, she's meant to be nervous, but nonetheless we just don't feel the longstanding familiarity she ostensibly has with her former neighbors.

Hughes, on the other hand, brings a near-nuclear level of confident energy to the stage as Averie. Although she seems to have blasted in from another family, her energetic presence is a balm.

Bailey finds many warm and humorous moments in this emotionally difficult story of a family dealing with dementia, and Jones-Taylor gives the show a powerful core. Much of the play, though, is less compelling. ■

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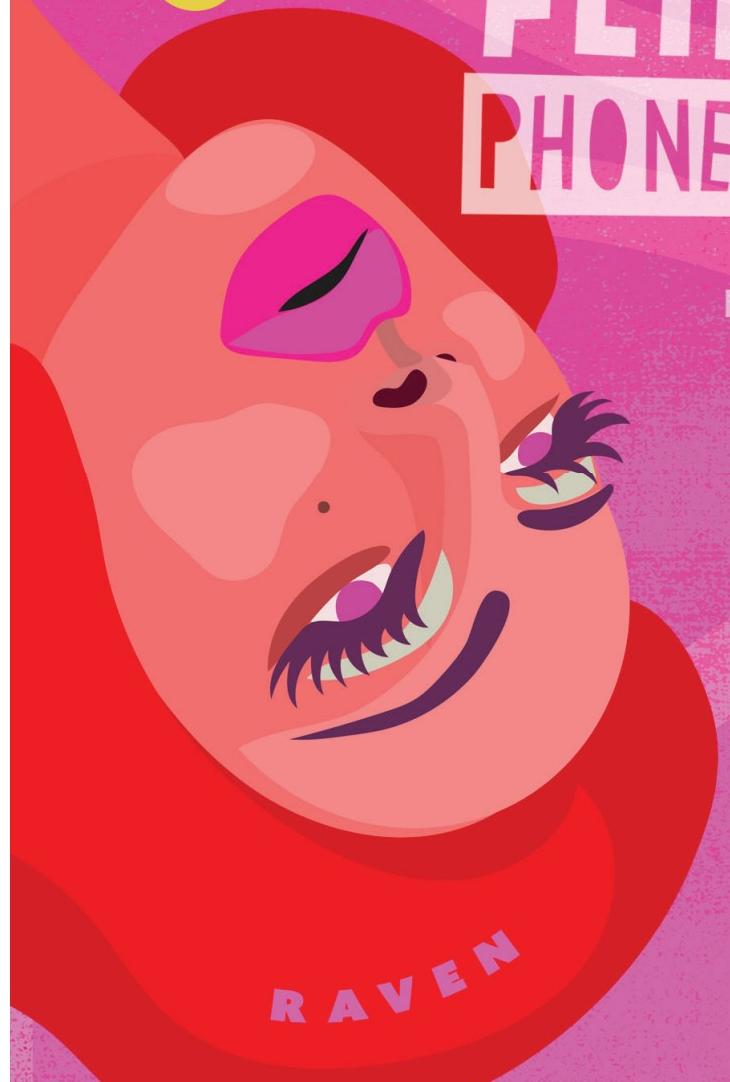
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**ERIN DUNINCK**

37, OWNER OF GOLDEN RULE

**What are you wearing?**

Winsome tunic, Gap turtleneck and jeans, Intentionally Blank shoes, Askov Finlayson hat.

**Describe your style:**

Haphazard, clumsy, know-it-all.

**Favorite places to shop?**

The Foundry Home Goods, Hackwith Design House, and Winsome Goods.

**Best winter style tip?**

Layers and hats all the time.



**LIZ WELLE**

27, FREELANCER

**What are you wearing?**

Everlane jacket and pants, shirt from Urban Outfitters, Nike shoes.

**Describe your style:**

Comfortable, staple-driven, all over the place.

**Favorite places to shop?**

Everlane, Oak + Fort, Zara.

**Best winter style tip?**

I don't care if you look stupid, wear the tights.



**ERICA JOHNSON**

27, THERAPIST

**What are you wearing?**

Vintage coat, shirt from Savers, Banana Republic jeans, Topshop shoes, Mansur Gavriel bag.

**Describe your style:**

Classic and simple with statement pieces.

**Favorite places to shop?**

Everlane, thrift stores, June Resale.

**Best winter style tip?**

Get different coats for every day. Coats are the best accessory.

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12/28 - GYPSE FREQ CIRCUS - Debut Album release  
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12/29 - LEFT LANE CRUISER & CRANKSHAFT & GEAR GRINDERS  
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thu : december 21

9:30pm : the beguine brothers old time c & w revue, ltd

fri : december 22

7pm : laura and sean's movie and music trivia

10pm : hayden fox, collapsing stars  
jesse revel

sat : december 23

7pm : trivia mafia presents:  
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10pm : the carnegies, panther ray  
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sun : december 24

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mon : december 25

christmas day—we are open!!!

tue : december 26

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# NO REASON WHY

Teen rockers Why Not aren't waiting for answers

BY JERARD FAGERBERG

**T**wo women, gobbed to life in school bus-yellow paint, stare out from the canvas. Their eyes are pinched, their cheekbones knobbed, and their teeth sharpened to letters that smile a terse "Why Not."

Whatever artistic intent Isaac Dell's mother had with her painting is anyone's guess. The words could function as either a dare or a warning. But her 16-year-old son and his bandmates found some inspiration in the piece, and they named their band after her skinny lettering.

"When we were recording our very first demo in the basement, the painting was in the stairwell," Isaac Dell remembers. "We just looked up and saw it staring at us."

**WHY NOT**  
record release show  
6 p.m., Wednesday,  
December 20  
The Cabooze,  
Minneapolis

Blunt enough to mean nothing and anything at the same time. A little snot-nosed, a little capricious, and the perfect emblem for a band of teenagers piecing together their ethos as they go.

"It finds a way to be underlyingly cohesive," Dell says. "We just have this need to be unique and keep experimenting."

Why Not didn't become a band to create a platform for some grand, concerted thesis. Their only motivation was the youthful instinct to do something energetic with their minds and bodies while they're still vital.

Initially, singer/bassist Henry Breen (15) wanted to start a progressive metal band.



Why Not

JERARD FAGERBERG

He reached out to drummer and longtime friend Joshua MacGregor (16). They wrote one song, which Breen condemns as "shit... so bad," before a basement show featuring the Happy Children turned them on to a new direction. They quickly recruited Dell and pivoted toward the freak folk/math rock hybrid they are today.

Why Not and the Happy Children share a lot of fraternal elements—their songs are percussion-driven and Breen's vocals sometimes crawl down into the growling register of Happy Children singer Caleb Hinz's. That's probably not a coincidence: Hinz is MacGregor's brother. But Why Not have been cautious to separate themselves from the jaunty jam band that inspired them and gave them their first opening gigs.

"We were all very influenced by the Happy Children," Breen says. "There was initially a little panic in the back of my mind that we'd sound too much like them, but once we started working on the recording, that kind of faded away."

Their rambunctious debut LP, *Friends*, is given life by MacGregor's tumbling grooves, Dell's indulgent riffing, and Breen's vocal tantrums. The album repeatedly crashes through genres in its 10-song run. On

"Waste My Time," Why Not sound like Pavement colliding with Minus the Bear. On "Fall Apart," it's all wah and Trey Anastasio-style note bending.

There's something risky about releasing such a raw debut. Older bands often anguish over their first impressions, putting out strings of EPs and singles before mustering up the wherewithal to go for an LP. Why Not decided to thud onto the scene with a smattering of songs that are daring and untethered from each other.

"We're a young band, and we don't have the resources to rent a nice studio and hang out," Dell explains. "We decided to see the value in just getting something out there."

*Friends* was recorded mostly at the Garage and entirely for free. The recording process opened Why Not to a "fuck it, let's do it," attitude, and the LP's thirst for experimentation makes it a galvanizing listen. Its energy is candid, its whimsy is virtuous, and its distaste for convention is enough to jolt even the stodgiest geezer.

*Friends* is an album than can only exist now. As the members of Why Not grow and distort into college and adulthood, their tastes will change. Their skills will transform. They'll sing about new people and the way they ruin their lives. But *Friends* will remain a permanent record of where they were when things were as simple as looking up the stairwell and deciding who you were.

"It's very much a look into where we were at the time of making it," Dell says of *Friends*. "A lot of our new songs that you won't hear on that album are quite different, a little more complex. I think

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Saturday, December 23 at 9pm  
**Ross William Perry**

Wednesday, December 27 at 7:30pm  
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Friday, December 29 at 9pm  
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**JAMES BALLENTINE**  
**Uptown VFW** POST 246

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

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EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 10PM

### 12.22 YOU OUGHTA KNOW 90'S HOLIDAY SHOW

### 12.23 PRIVATE OATES HOLIDAY SHOW

### 12.28 BALLENTINE'S BURLESQUE

### 12.31 NEW YEAR WHO THIS?

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w/ DJ BOB

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#### 1.31 SPIDER JOHN KOERNER

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**SAT.** THE COMMITTEE, AISHA BAKER, DEB BROWN, MAURICE JACOX, RE IGNITED

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## MUSIC

that this album is really kind of a look into the beginnings of us as a band. That's more in the context than the content."

"That's part of the incohesiveness of it," Breen says, adding that he found his confidence as a singer through writing songs like "Deme/A/tia" and "Guided Meditation." "It's us learning how to write better songs and knowing the kind of sound we want. As we were writing those songs, it was being figured out. The recordings are the polished versions, but they're a reflection of the time it took to get there."

The most deliberate aspect of the record is its name. Though Dell admits he was initially just drawn to the sound of the word, *Friends* has come to take on a dual meaning. It's a reflection of how the three band members have come together, but it's also a thank-you to the supporters without whom Why Not would never have left Dell's basement.

"We owe it to our friends to put them in," MacGregor says reverently. "Whenever we listen to this album, we'll be thinking of them." □P

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## CRITICS' PICKS

### THE BAD PLUS

DAKOTA, WEDNESDAY 12.20  
THROUGH SATURDAY 12.23

The music of the Bad Plus, the Coen Brothers of jazz, has always been a Dali-esque calculus of melting equations, surrealistic geometry, trigonometric absurdity, and algebraic conundrums, and their latest earthshaking news is a matter of basic mathematics. Following a year-ending, week-long run at NYC's Village Vanguard, the BP will subtract pianist Ethan Iverson and add Orrin Evans, making the trio's annual holiday run at the Dakota the original lineup's penultimate residency and their final gigs in the heart of their Twin Cities/western Wisconsin roots. Iverson's plans aren't specific, but lately he's played with a Monk-oriented trio, continues to be a busy critical voice online, and will launch a new, NYC jazz-oriented site. Evans, a brilliant Philly-based pianist with equally far-reaching, eclectic influences, has been in the studio this fall with drummer Dave King and bassist Reid Anderson working on new BP material. They pledge to continue playing the band's extensive songbook live, including the radically deconstructed pop, rock, and country tunes that have made the Plus iconic iconoclasts. Meanwhile, Iverson's local swan song should be a honking treat. \$45 at 7 p.m.; \$40 at 9 p.m. 1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-332-5299. —RICK MASON

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MONDAY DEC 25  
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TUESDAY DEC 26  
**MEOWY CHRISTMAS!** [FREE]

CHRIS MELROSE/ NEON BLAQUE

# Loving Lesbians

A straight man with a habit of falling for the ones he can't have

I am a 22-year-old Italian man, 100 percent straight, sensitive, and sporty. I have been reading Savage Love for years in Internazionale. I have one question for you: Why do I always fall in love with lesbians? The last girl with whom this happened told me it was my "Red Cross" mindset that made me fall in love with girls who are insecure/sad/melancholy, so I have a sort of selection bias that excludes most straight girls I meet. I do not believe this, because the world is full of straight girls who need saving. So why then, Dan? WHY? I have a girlfriend. I truly love her. Since September, we have been living in two different cities because she went away to study. I am afraid that one day she is going to tell me she's gay too. She always talks with me about a new super-cute female friend. Is she a lesbian? I have recently met another girl, super empathetic. She is also gay. Can I love two people at the same time? This is the fourth time that this has happened. Is my girlfriend gay? Why do I find lesbians so attractive? I'm freaking.

INCREASINGLY TORMENTED  
ABOUT LESBIAN YEARNINGS

**There's a lot** going on in your letter, ITALY, so I'm going to take your questions one at a time...

1. Maybe you always fall in love with lesbians or maybe this was a series of coincidences—by pure chance you fell for more than one woman who turned out to be a lesbian—and, hey, since you're probably going to love a few more women over the course of your life, ITALY, that "always" seems a bit premature. It's also possible you find women with a certain degree of masculine energy and/or swagger attractive, and women with that swagger are somewhat likelier to be lesbians, slightly upping your chances of falling in love with four girls—who-turned-out-to-be-lesbians in a row.

2. Women—straight or bi or lesbian—don't need "saving." They need respect, they need to be taken seriously, they need bodily autonomy, and they need loving partners and political allies.



Dan Savage

3. Your girlfriend may be a lesbian—anyone could in these highly fluid days, even me. But if your girlfriend isn't straight, ITALY, she's likelier to be bisexual, seeing as there are roughly three times as many bi women as there are lesbian women. And if she seems gayer now than when you met, that could be because you landed a straight girl who had been suppressing her masculine swagger—which many men don't find attractive—and she's consciously or subconsciously come to the realization that she doesn't have to play the girly girl around you to hold your attention. Quite the opposite, in fact.

4. It's entirely possible to love more than one person at a time. Just as we are capable of loving more than one parent, child, sibling, friend, and television show at a time (you know I love you both equally, *Lady Dynamite* and *The Crown*), we can love more than one romantic partner at a time. But we're told that romantic love is a zero-sum game so often—if someone wins, someone else loses—it has become a self-fulfilling/relationship-destroying prophecy. It's a myth that harms not just people who might want to be with two people, but partnered monogamous people as well. A person who is convinced he can feel romantic love for only one person at a time will doubt his love for a long-term partner if he develops a crush on someone new. He'll say to himself, "I couldn't possibly feel this way about this barista if I was still in love with my partner of 10 years." But those feelings can exist side by side—stable, secure, lasting love for a long-term partner and an intense infatuation (most likely fleeting) for a new person.

5. Maybe it's not an accident that you keep falling for lesbians. There are lots of straight men out there who have a thing for dykes. It's entirely possible that you aren't worried your girlfriend is a lesbian, ITALY, but secretly hoping she is. Good luck!

[mail@savagelove.net](mailto:mail@savagelove.net)

Follow Dan on Twitter: @fakedansavage  
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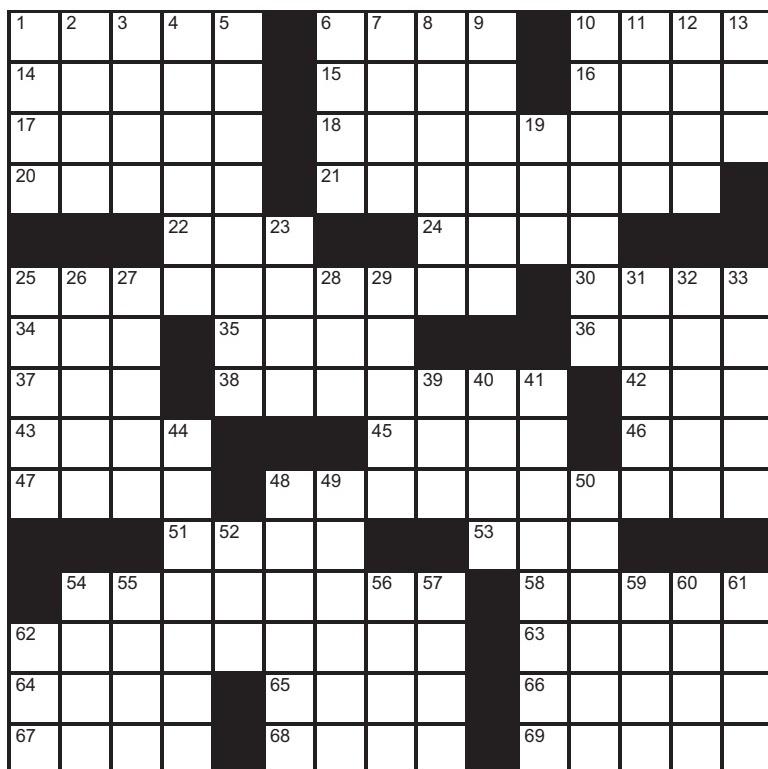
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